Spring Turkey Hunter Questionnaire 2002

by Jessica Kitchell

Abstract

Ninety-two percent of all spring turkey hunters that received a harvest permit hunted turkeys during the 2002 spring turkey season. The overall success rate for active hunters was 36.2%. Of the successful hunters, 1,513 harvested 1 turkey, and 78 harvested 2 turkeys. The mean number of Gobblers/Jakes seen by hunters was 4.8 compared to a mean number of hens of 8.1. Nearly 76% of the respondents indicated they would like to see the number of hunting permits for their hunting zone to stay the same or decrease. Nearly 47% of the respondents indicated that turkey numbers in their hunting zones remained about the same relative to 2001. Statewide, the overall satisfaction level with the spring turkey hunt was 7.2 on a scale of 1 (worst) to 10 (best).

Methods

A sample of hunter names and addresses were randomly drawn from the current spring turkey hunter permit file. A survey was mailed to 10,000 spring turkey hunters after the completion of the spring turkey season. The questionnaire was mailed in proportion to the number of permits distributed in each zone. The questionnaire asked each hunter specific questions about their spring turkey hunting experience (Figure 1). A second mailing was made to 5,000 of the non-respondents. Data from all returned questionnaires were summarized using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

The current spring turkey hunting zones were then grouped into regional areas (Figure 2). The regions were created from zones that had similar turkey populations, hunter densities, and habitat. These regions were created so that responses could be pooled to increase the response rates in some of the less hunted zones.

Results

A total of 4,781 spring turkey hunter surveys were returned. The corrected response rate was 47.8%. The proportion of respondents who applied with landowner preference for this spring's turkey hunt permit was 18.7% (Table 1, Question 1). Statewide, 92% of the respondents have 0-5 years of spring turkey hunting experience and only 8.0% have 6+ years of experience (Table 1, Question 2).

Statewide, 92.0% of the respondents hunted turkeys this spring. Of those who did not hunt, 46.5% bought a 2002 wild turkey stamp (Table 1, Question 3). The success rate for active hunters who received a harvest permit was 36.2%. This success rate may be high because hunters who were successful may have been more likely to return the survey than hunters who were unsuccessful. The spring turkey harvest registration data success rate (25.0%) is uncorrected for nonhunters and is probably a low estimate. Just over twenty-eight percent (28.3%) of the respondents had attended a turkey hunter education clinic sponsored by the WDNR or the National Wild Turkey Federation (Table 1, Question 5).

Surveyed hunters were asked how difficult it was to find a place to hunt in the spring of 2002, and 87.7% of the respondents said it was 'very easy' or 'somewhat easy' (Table 1, Question 6).

Spring turkey hunters were also asked to report the days on which they hunted. Hunting pressure was relatively constant with more pressure on Friday and Saturday of the hunting season (Table 1, Question 7).

Statewide, the mean # of Gobblers/Jakes seen by hunters was 4.8; the mean # of Gobblers/Jakes heard by hunters was 7.7; the mean # of Hens seen was 8.1, and the mean # of Hens heard was 5.5 (Table 1, Question 8). Most respondents (66.7%) did not shoot at the first turkey which presented an opportunity; 65.1% reported waiting for a better shot, or for an adult gobbler (Table 1, Question 9). Surveyed hunters were asked if they hit any turkeys that they were unable to retrieve: 4.7% were unable to find their bird (Table 1, Question 10). Of the successful hunters, 1,511 harvested 1 turkey, and 79 harvested 2 turkeys. Most successful hunters (80.7%) harvested their turkeys between sunrise and noon (Table 1, Question 11).

Most respondents (91%) hunted on private land or a combination of private and public lands (Table 1, Question 12). Under one-quarter (22.1%) responded to "other hunters kept me from hunting where I wanted to" with 'definitely yes,' or 'somewhat.' Similarly, 17.4% of respondents answered "there was too much competition from other hunters where I hunted" with 'definitely yes,' or 'somewhat.' However, only 13.2% of the respondents indicated that other hunters interfered with their chance to bag a bird (Table 1, Question 13).

Overall, 37.5% of respondents rated their spring turkey hunting experience as 'very high' or 'fairly high,' while 24.2% rated their hunt as 'fairly low' or 'very low' (Table 1, Question 15). The most important factor that influenced respondents' perceptions of a quality hunt was "seeing turkeys/calling birds in/hearing gobbling". The least important factor was "killing a turkey (Tom, Jake or bearded hen)" (Table 1, Question 16).

Most respondents (46.5%) feel that turkey numbers in the zones they hunted in the spring stayed the same relative to the year before (Table 1, Question 17). Nearly seventy-six percent (75.9%) of the respondents would like to see the number of permits available for the zone(s) they hunted to stay the same or decrease (Table 1, Question 18).

Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with spring turkey hunting in Wisconsin on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best and 1 being the worst; statewide, they ranked their overall satisfaction level at 7.2 (Table 1, Question 19).

Table 1. Responses to the 2002 Spring Turkey Hunting Questionnaire. C= Central Region EC =East Central Region NE = North Eastern Region NW= North Western Region SE =South Eastern Region SW =South Western Region

1. Did you apply with landowner preference for this spring's turkey permit? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	17.8	18.2	22.2	25.3	18.2	13.7	18.7
No	82.2	81.3	77.7	74.1	81.6	85.7	80.8

2. How many years of spring turkey hunting experience do you have?

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
0-5	93.1	90.9	92.6	93.3	90.6	91.9	92.0
6-10	7.0	8.7	7.4	6.3	9.2	7.5	7.7
11-15	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
16+	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.3

3. Did you hunt turkeys this spring? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	93.1	90.9	92.6	93.2	90.6	91.9	92.0
No	7.0	8.7	7.4	6.4	9.2	7.5	7.7

If no, did you buy a 2002 wild turkey stamp? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	48.3	49.2	44.1	51.3	54.1	40.9	46.5
No	51.7	50.8	55.9	48.7	46.0	59.1	53.5

- 4. Please list the zone and time period your carcass tag(s) were valid for this spring? (Percent)
- 5. Have you ever attended a turkey hunter education clinic sponsored by the Wisconsin DNR or the National Wild Turkey? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	25.1	26.5	23.4	28.5	27.8	33.8	28.3
No	75.0	73.2	76.5	71.5	72.2	66.1	71.6

6. How difficult was it for you to find a place to hunt in the spring of 2002? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Very Easy	56.8	57.0	54.8	55.1	45.3	56.6	55.0
Somewhat Easy	31.7	30.5	32.4	34.4	38.2	31.5	32.7
Somewhat Difficult	10.1	11.5	11.1	8.8	13.4	10.7	10.8
Very Difficult	1.4	1.0	1.7	1.3	3.1	1.3	1.5

7. Please check all the days that you hunted for turkeys this spring. (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Wednesday	20.7	20.5	22.6	21.4	23.5	20.4	21.3
Thursday	19.7	19.2	19.5	19.8	19.1	19.9	19.6
Friday	22.0	21.8	21.5	22.0	21.0	22.6	22.0
Saturday	22.5	22.8	21.6	21.7	21.6	22.4	22.2
Sunday	15.1	15.6	14.8	15.3	14.8	14.7	15.0

8. Please fill in the number of turkeys you saw or heard while actively hunting. (Mean)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Gobblers/Jakes seen	4.1	4.2	5.0	5.8	4.5	4.6	4.8
Gobblers/Jakes heard	6.9	6.5	7.2	9.7	6.0	8.2	7.7
Hens Seen	8.1	7.7	8.9	9.5	6.9	7.7	8.1
Hens Heard	5.4	4.4	5.7	6.6	4.8	5.7	5.5

9. Did you shoot at the first turkey which presented an opportunity? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	32.4	29.6	31.3	36.9	31.9	35.1	33.3
No	67.6	70.2	68.7	62.9	68.1	64.9	66.7

• If no, please tell us which of the following was the reason. (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Waiting for a better shot	33.1	34.1	37.2	29.9	35.8	32.8	33.7
Waiting for an adult gobbler	33.1	33.2	32.8	29.2	30.8	30.4	31.4
Waiting for a larger bird	6.6	5.2	6.9	8.5	9.0	7.3	7.2
Wanted to hunt longer	5.2	4.3	4.6	7.8	4.7	4.3	5.1
Other	22.0	23.3	18.5	24.6	19.7	25.3	22.7

10. Did you hit a turkey you were unable to retrieve? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	3.3	2.9	4.1	4.9	5.3	6.1	4.7
No	96.7	96.9	95.9	94.8	94.4	93.6	95.2

If yes, how many? (Frequency)

Number of Turkeys	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
1	11	19	30	30	20	66	176
2	0	1	0	1	1	3	6
3	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

11. How many turkeys did you harvest this spring? (Frequency)

Number of Turkeys	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
1	152	211	274	276	152	446	1511
2	7	10	11	16	5	30	79

What time did you harvest your turkey(s)? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Sunrise-9am	52.8	57.8	62.8	61.6	70.0	59.7	60.7
9am-Noon	26.4	20.9	19.1	20.7	15.6	19.2	20.0
Noon-3pm	9.8	12.9	11.6	11.2	6.3	12.4	11.2
3pm-5pm	11.0	8.4	6.5	6.6	8.1	8.7	8.1

12. Did you hunt on: (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Public Land	27.1	9.7	7.9	4.4	13.0	4.1	9.0
Your Own Land	19.2	27.0	21.7	18.8	14.4	14.4	18.9
Other Private Land	30.3	49.8	54.4	64.7	60.6	73.5	59.1
Both Public and Private Land	23.4	13.6	16.0	12.1	12.0	8.1	13.0

^{13.} Other hunters may have affected your turkey hunt. For each statement below, please check the response which best reflects your 2002 spring hunt. (Percent)

• Other hunters sometimes kept me from hunting where I wanted to.

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Definitely Yes	9.6	7.1	8.4	9.3	11.1	9.0	8.9
Somewhat	15.3	11.9	12.7	12.8	13.2	13.8	13.2
Not Much	20.8	15.8	16.8	17.2	16.5	15.1	16.6
No, Not At All	54.2	65.2	62.1	60.6	59.2	62.2	61.3

• There was too much competition from other hunters where I hunted.

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Definitely Yes	3.7	4.6	4.9	4.6	4.3	3.9	4.3
Somewhat	13.9	10.2	15.0	12.7	14.6	13.0	13.1
Not Much	28.2	22.1	21.0	24.1	25.1	22.1	23.1
No, Not At All	54.2	63.1	59.2	58.6	56.1	61.0	59.4

• Other hunters interfered with my chance to bag a bird.

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Definitely Yes	5.8	4.4	7.2	5.5	6.9	4.9	5.7
Somewhat	8.1	7.1	6.9	7.4	9.8	7.1	7.5
Not Much	18.1	15.9	17.0	16.9	16.2	15.4	16.4
No, Not At All	67.9	72.4	69.0	69.9	67.1	72.6	70.5

- 14. How many turkeys do you know of that were shot by people this spring and were:
- Tagged but not registered

Number of Turkeys	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
1	7	5	4	8	4	8	36
2	2	7	3	4	2	7	25
3	1	1	2	2	2	8	16
4	0	3	3	2	1	2	11
> 4	2	2	1	3	0	7	15

Not tagged or registered

Number of Turkeys	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
1	5	8	10	11	5	15	54
2	5	3	7	7	2	4	29
3	2	0	1	2	0	2	7
4	1	0	1	2	0	1	5
> 4	4	1	3	2	1	2	13

15. Overall, how would you rate the quality of your spring 2002 Wisconsin wild turkey hunt this year? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Very High	15.1	15.1	19.0	19.4	18.7	19.5	18.1
Fairly High	21.0	17.7	18.6	21.5	21.6	18.2	19.4
Average	41.1	37.8	37.7	36.1	39.1	38.7	38.2
Fairly Low	15.3	20.2	16.4	15.5	15.2	16.8	16.7
Very Low	7.5	9.2	8.3	7.5	5.4	6.8	7.5

16. Rate the factors that most influence your perception of a "quality" spring turkey hunt. Enter a value of 1 to 7 next to each statement, with "1" having the most effect and "7" having the least effect on your hunting experience. (Mean)

Factor	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
An Opportunity to kill a turkey	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2
Seeing turkeys/calling birds in/hearing gobbling	2.3	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.3
Killing a turkey (Tom, Jake or bearded hen)	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.0	4.2	4.1
Killing a mature Tom	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.7
Weather	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.7	4.1	3.8	3.9
Not seeing other hunters	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.7
Spending time with friends and family	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.6	3.1	3.2

17. Do you feel that the turkey numbers have changed from last year in the zones(s) you hunted this spring? (percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Increased	21.5	12.7	28.6	24.5	17.4	13.3	19.0
Stay the same	41.8	47.7	40.2	48.4	50.2	49.1	46.5
Decreased	25.1	33.9	20.7	18.2	20.8	31.6	26.1
Did not hunt same zone	11.7	5.7	10.6	9.0	11.6	6.0	8.4

18. Would you like to see the number of permits available for the zone(s) you hunted changed? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Increased	25.3	20.1	29.0	33.0	23.4	18.1	24.1
Stay the same	68.8	75.7	64.9	62.5	72.6	74.9	70.4
Decreased	5.9	4.3	6.0	4.3	3.4	7.0	5.5

19. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best and 1 being the worst, how would you rate the quality of the DNR's turkey management program? (Mean)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Rating	7.1	7.1	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.3	7.2

State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Wisconsin Spring Turkey Hunting Questionnaire

s. 23.09(2)(k), Wis. Stats. Form $2300-117 \pmod{8.5/02}$

Dear Turkey Hunter:

We are surveying a sample of Wisconsin wild turkey hunting permit holders to obtain needed information for managing Wisconsin's turkeys and setting permit levels. Please take a few minutes to complete the attached voluntary questionnaire. Completion of this survey is voluntary. Your participation in this survey will help us continue to progress in restoring wild turkeys to Wisconsin and in providing Wisconsin hunters with a quality hunt. You should complete this questionnaire even if you did not hunt or harvest a turkey. Please note information on this form will remain confidential and will not be used for any other purpose.

When you have finished, reverse the flap on this questionnaire, tape the edge and mail. Using your stamp will save the Department funds needed for management, even though no postage is required to return the questionnaire.

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Keith Warnke Upland Ecologist			
Did you apply with landowner preference for this spring's turkey hunt permit? Yes No	2. How many years of spring turkey hunting experience do you have? (Check ONE)		
3. Did you hunt turkeys this spring? Yes No If no, did you buy a 2002 wild turkey stamp? Yes No	4. Please list the zone and time period your carcass tag(s) were valid for this spring: Zone: Period:		
Have you ever attended a turkey hunter education clinic sponsored Yes No			
	ERE AND RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE.		
6. How difficult was it for you to find a place to hunt in the spring of 2	002?		
☐ Very easy ☐ Somewhat easy ☐	Somewhat difficult		
 Please list the zone(s) and time period(s) and check all the days that you hunted for turkeys this spring. (If your tags were for one zone and time period, fill out one column only.) 	Please fill in the number of turkeys you saw or heard while actively hunting. (If your tags were for one zone and time period, fill out one column only.)		
Zone: Period: Zone: Period:	Zone: Period: Zone: Period:		
Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday Sunday Sunday	Gobblers/Jakes seen Gobblers/Jakes seen Gobblers/Jakes heard Gobblers/Jakes heard Hens seen Hens seen Hens heard Hens heard		
9. Did you shoot at the first turkey which presented an opportunity?	10. Did you hit a turkey you were unable to retrieve?		
☐ Yes ☐ No	Yes No If yes, how many?		
If no, please tell us which of the following was the reason. Waiting for a better shot. Waiting for an adult gobbler. (Did not want to shoot a jake.) Waiting for a larger bird. Wanted to hunt longer. Other (please describe)	11. How many turkeys did you harvest this spring? 0 1 2 What time did you harvest your turkey(s)? Turkey #1: Sunrise-9 am 9 am-Noon Noon-3 pm 3 pm-5 pm Turkey #2: Sunrise-9 am 9 am-Noon Noon-3 pm 3 pm-5 pm		
12. Did you hunt on:			
Public land Your own land	Other Private land Both public and private land		

Figure 1. 2002 Spring Turkey Hunting Questionnaire.

 Other hunters may have affected your turkey hunt. For each stateme hunt. 	ent below, please check the response which best reflects your 2002 spring Definitely Yes Somewhat Not Much No, Not At All			
Other hunters sometimes kept me from hunting where I wanted to.				
There was too much competition from other hunters where I hunted.	□ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4			
Other hunters interfered with my chance to bag a bird.	□ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4			
14. How many turkeys do you know of that were shot by people this spring and were:	15. Overall, how would you rate the quality of your spring 2002 Wisconsin wild turkey hunt this year? (Check ONE)			
Tagged but not registered				
Not tagged or registered	☐ Very High ☐ About Average ☐ Fairly Low ☐ Fairly High ☐ Very Low			
(Note: You will NOT be contacted about this.)				
16. Rate the factors that most influence your perception of a "quality" spring turkey hunt. Enter a value of 1 to 7 next to each statement, with "1" having the most effect and"7" having the least effect on your hunting experience.	17. Do you feel that the turkey numbers have changed from last year in the zone(s) you hunted this spring? (If your tags were for one zone, fill out one column only.)			
An opportunity to kill a turkey Seeing turkeys/Calling birds in/hearing gobbling Killing a turkey (Tom, Jake or bearded hen) Killing a mature Tom Weather Not seeing other hunters Spending time with friends and family	Zone: Zone: Increased Stay the same Decreased Did not hunt same zone Zone: Increased Dtoreased Decreased Did not hunt same zone			
18. Would you like to see the number of permits available for the zone(s) you hunted changed? (If your tags were for one zone, fill out one column only.)	19. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best and 1 being the worst, rate your overall satisfaction with spring turkey hunting in Wisconsin.			
Zone:	Circle one:			
☐ Increased ☐ Increased ☐ Stay the same ☐ Decreased ☐ Decreased ☐ Decreased	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10			
Seasonal Dates:				
Period Dates A April 10 - 14 B April 17 - 21 C April 24 - 28 D May 1 - 5 E May 8 - 11 F May 15 - 19				

Figure 1. Continued.



Figure 2. Turkey Regions.